

Meeting #4: Consolidations

Town of Lisbon Long Range Vision Committee
May 31, 2007

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Agenda

1. Roll Call
2. Discussion regarding evaluation of options
3. Discussion of updated draft survey
4. Consolidations
5. Preparation for next meeting
6. Adjournment

Discussion of Town Residents Survey

- Draft survey in packet

Consolidations

Municipal Consolidation

- The process of joining two or more cities, villages or towns to create a single municipal entity.
- In some cases, consolidations that involve a town must be submitted to the Circuit Court and the Department of Administration for review.

1st Method for Consolidation

- Section 66.0229 – Authorizes a town, village or city to consolidate with a contiguous town, village or city. An ordinance is passed by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the consolidating community's governing body. Ordinance describes terms of consolidation and must be ratified by referendum in each municipality. If a town is involved, it must be submitted to the circuit court and the DOA for review.

2nd Method for Consolidation

- Section 66.0230 – Authorizes all or part of a town to consolidate with a contiguous city or village. Major requirements include:
 - Participating municipalities must adopt identical resolutions describing a basic level of services to be provided
 - Boundary agreements must be entered into between the consolidating municipalities and any adjacent non-participant city, village or town
 - Consolidating municipalities must develop a comprehensive plan for the proposed consolidated territory
 - The consolidation ordinance must be passed by a two-thirds vote of all members of each board or council and ratified by referendum in each municipality
- The DOA is not directly involved with this type of consolidation

Benefits

- Improve services and efficiency
- Improve community identify
- Stabilize municipal boundaries
- Expand political power
- Increase resources such as tax base, housing, water, land, and natural and cultural amenities.
- Address regional issues.

Difficulties

- Consolidation in Wisconsin is rare.
 - Last consolidation occurred in 1984. (Village and Town of Cable, Bayfield County)
- Recent efforts have either failed to meet statutory standards or have failed to gain sufficient local support.
 - Lack of local support often stems from projected local property tax increase for one of the parties.

Proposed Legislation

- Currently, the state constitution's uniformity clause requires all property owners in municipalities and other tax districts to be taxed at the same rate
- A proposed state constitutional amendment (AJR-39) would allow 12 years of dual tax rates
 - The bill recently was passed by committee and has been or will be referred to the Senate Rules Committee, who would schedule it to be debated on the Senate floor
 - Passed unanimously or near unanimously

Consolidations Under Consideration

Town and City of Verona (Dane County)

- The concept of consolidation was precipitated by annexations of Town by the City
- A focus group was formed from Town and City citizens
 - This led to Town Chair and Mayor discussing boundary agreements with attorneys
- The Town's attorney felt that a boundary agreement would not prevent neighboring cities from annexing Town land

Town and City of Verona (Dane County) continued

- A three-way boundary agreement involving the City of Madison was considered, but it was felt this would not work
- The Town and City have formed seven committees to look at how consolidation would affect both communities

Town and City of Verona (Dane County) continued

- According to the Town Chair, the “worst-case scenario” for a town tax increase would be 10 percent, but will likely be less
- There is a possibility that services such as sewer would be removed from the general tax levy and become a special fee to those who use them

Town and City of Verona (Dane County) continued

- If consolidation occurs, the City Council and Town Board would initially combine, forming a 13-member body plus a mayor. Following the next census, the city would be divided into four districts with eight council members and a mayor
- The draft consolidation ordinance includes a clause stating "It shall be the policy of the City to maintain, to the extent possible, the rural character of certain areas formerly located in the Town of Verona."

Village and City of Pewaukee

- A consultant study in 2002 recommended consolidation
- The City has a lower tax rate and much more land available for development
- City aldermen halted consideration of the consolidation proposal. Some members thought the consultant's report was erroneous because it suggested that taxes for city residents would decrease after the consolidation
- The City and Village have since negotiated to consolidate certain municipal services